No. XVII. MAY. PRICE 1s.

VANITY FAIR:

PEN AND PENCIL SKETCHES OF ENGLISH SOCIETY.

BY W. M. THACKERAY,

Author of "The Irish Sketch Book:" "Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo:" of "Jeames's Diary" and the "Snob Papers" in Punch: &c. &c.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED AT THE PUNCH OFFICE, 85, FLEET STREET.

J. MENZIES, EDINBURGH; J. M'LEOD, GLASGOW; J. M'GLASHAN, DUBLIN.

[Bradbury & Evans, Printers, Whitefriars.]

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Mr. Jos Hookahbadar

A meeting.

CHAPTER LVII.

EOTHEN.

IT was one of the many causes for personal pride with which old Osborne chose to recreate himself, that Sedley, his ancient rival, enemy, and benefactor, was in his last days so utterly defeated and humiliated, as to be forced to accept pecuniary obligations at the hands of the man who had most injured and insulted him. The successful man of the world cursed the old pauper, and relieved him from time to time. As he furnished George with money for his mother, he gave the boy to understand by hints, delivered in his brutal, coarse way, that George's maternal grandfather was but a wretched old bankrupt and dependant, and that John Sedley might thank the man to whom he already owed ever so much money, for the aid which his generosity now chose to administer. George carried the pompous supplies to his mother and the shattered old widower whom it was now the main busines of her life to tend and comfort. The little fellow patronised the feeble and disappointed old man.

It may have shown a want of "proper pride" in Amelia that she chose to accept these money benefits at the hands of her father's enemy. But proper pride and this poor lady had never had much acquaintance together. A disposition naturally simple and demanding protection; a long course of poverty and humility, of daily privations, and hard words, of kind offices and no returns, had been her lot ever since womanhood almost, or since her luckless marriage with George Osborne. You who see your betters, bearing up under this shame every day, meekly suffering under the slights of fortune, gentle and unpitied, poor, and rather despised for their poverty, do you ever step down from your prosperity and wash the feet of these poor wearied beggars? The very thought of them is

odious and low. "There must be classes—there must be rich and poor," Dives says, smacking his claret— (it is well if he even sends the broken meat out to Lazarus sitting under the window.) Very true; but think how mysterious and often unaccountable it is—that lottery of life which gives to this man the purple and fine linen, and sends to the other rags for garments and dogs for comforters.

So I must own, that without much repining, on the contrary with something akin to gratitude, Amelia took the crumbs that her father-in-law let drop now and then and with them fed her own parent. Directly she understood it to be her duty, it was this young woman's nature (ladies, she is but thirty still, and we choose to call her a young woman even at that age)—it was, I say, her nature to sacrifice herself and to fling all that she had at the feet of the beloved object. During what long thankless nights had she worked out her fingers for little Georgy whilst at home with her; what buffets, scorns, privations, poverties had she endured for father and mother! And in the midst of all these solitary resignations and unseen sacrifices, she did not respect herself any more than the world respected her; but I believe thought in her heart that she was a poor-spirited, despicable little creature, whose luck in life was only too good for her merits. O you poor women! O you poor secret martyrs and victims, whose life is a torture, who are stretched on racks in your bedrooms, and who lay your heads down on the block daily at the drawing-room table; every man who watches your pains, or peers into those dark places where the torture is administered to you, must pity you—and—and thank God that he has a beard. I recollect seeing, years ago, at the prison for idiots and madmen at Bicêtre, near Paris, a poor wretch bent down under the bondage of his imprisonment and his personal infirmity, to whom one of our party gave a halfpennyworth of snuff in a *cornet* or "screw" of paper. The kindness was too much for the poor epileptic creature. He cried in an anguish of delight and gratitude: if anybody gave you and me a thousand a-year, or saved our lives, we could not be so affected. And so, if you properly tyrannise over a woman, you will find a halfp'orth of kindness act upon her, and bring tears into her eyes, as though you were an angel benefiting her.

Some such boons as these were the best which Fortune allotted to poor little Amelia. Her life, begun not unprosperously, had come down to this—to a mean prison and a long, ignoble bondage. Little George visited her captivity sometimes, and consoled it with feeble gleams of encouragement. Russell Square was the boundary of her prison: she might walk thither occasionally, but was always back to sleep in her cell at night; to perform cheerless duties; to watch by thankless sick-beds; to suffer the harassment and tyranny of querulous disappointed old age. How many thousands of people are there, women for the most part, who are doomed to endure this long slavery?—who are hospital-nurses without wages,—sisters of Charity, if you like, without the romance and the sentiment of sacrifice,—who strive, fast, watch, and suffer, unpitied; and fade away ignobly and unknown. The hidden and awful Wisdom which apportions the destinies of mankind is pleased so to humiliate and cast down the tender, good, and wise; and to set up the selfish, the foolish, or

the wicked. Oh, be humble, my brother, in your prosperity! Be gentle with those who are less lucky, if not more deserving. Think, what right have you to be scornful, whose virtue is a deficiency of temptation, whose success may be a chance, whose rank may be an ancestor's accident, whose prosperity is very likely a satire.

They buried Amelia's mother at the church-yard at Brompton; upon just such a rainy, dark day, as Amelia recollected when first she had been there to marry George. Her little boy sate by her side in pompous new sables. She remembered the old pew-woman and clerk. Her thoughts were away in other times as the parson read. But that she held George's hand in her own, perhaps she would have liked to change places with . . . Then, as usual, she felt ashamed of her selfish thoughts, and prayed inwardly to be strengthened to do her duty.

So she determined with all her might and strength to try and make her old father happy. She slaved, toiled, patched and mended, sang and played backgammon, read out the newspaper, cooked dishes for old Sedley, walked him out sedulously into Kensington Gardens or the Brompton Lanes, listened to his stories with untiring smiles and affectionate hypocrisy, or sate musing by his side and communing with her own thoughts and reminiscences, as the old man, feeble and querulous, sunned himself on the garden benches and prattled about his wrongs or his sorrows. What sad, unsatisfactory thoughts those of the widow were! The children running up and down the slopes and broad paths in the gardens, reminded her of George who was taken from her: the first George was taken from her: her selfish, guilty love, in both instances, had been rebuked and bitterly chastised. She strove to think it was right that she should be so punished. She was such a miserable wicked sinner. She was quite alone in the world.

I know that the account of this kind of solitary imprisonment is insufferably tedious, unless there is some cheerful or humorous incident to enliven it,—a tender gaoler, for instance, or a waggish commandant of the fortress, or a mouse to come out and play about Latude's beard and whiskers, or a subterranean passage under the castle, dug by Trenck with his nails and a toothpick: the historian has no such enlivening incident to relate in the narrative of Amelia's captivity. Fancy her, if you please, during this period, very sad, but always ready to smile when spoken to; in a very mean, poor, not to say vulgar position of life; singing songs, making puddings, playing cards, mending stockings, for her old father's benefit. So, never mind, whether she be a heroine or no; or you and I, however old, scolding, and bankrupt;—may we have in our last days a kind soft shoulder on which to lean, and a gentle hand to soothe our gouty old pillows.

Old Sedley grew very fond of his daughter after his wife's death; and Amelia had her consolation in doing her duty by the old man.

But we are not going to leave these two people long in such a low and ungenteel station of life. Better days, as far as worldly prosperity went, were in store for both. Perhaps the ingenious reader has guessed who was the stout gentleman who called upon Georgy at his school in company

with our old friend Major Dobbin. It was another old acquaintance returned to England, and at a time when his presence was likely to be of great comfort to his relatives there.

Major Dobbin having easily succeeded in getting leave from his good-natured commandant to proceed to Madras, and thence probably to Europe, on urgent private affairs, never ceased travelling night and day until he reached his journey's end, and had directed his march with such celerity, that he arrived at Madras in a high fever. His servants who accompanied him, brought him to the house of the friend with whom he had resolved to stay until his departure for Europe in a state of delirium; and it was thought for many many days that he would never travel farther than the burying-ground of the church of St. George's, where the troops should fire a salvo over his grave, and where many a gallant officer lies far away from his home.

Here as the poor fellow lay tossing in his fever, the people who watched him might have heard him raving about Amelia. The idea that he should never see her again depressed him in his lucid hours. He thought his last day was come; and he made his solemn preparations for departure: setting his affairs in this world in order, and leaving the little property of which he was possessed to those whom he most desired to benefit. The friend in whose house he was located witnessed his testament. He desired to be buried with a little brown hair-chain which he wore round his neck, and which, if the truth must be known, he had got from Amelia's maid at Brussels, when the young widow's hair was cut off, during the fever which prostrated her after the death of George Osborne on the plateau of Mount St. John.

He recovered, rallied, relapsed again, having undergone such a process of blood-letting and calomel as showed the strength of his original constitution. He was almost a skeleton when they put him on board the Ramchunder, East Indiaman, Captain Bragg, from Calcutta touching at Madras; and so weak and prostrate, that his friend who had tended him through his illness, prophesied that the honest Major would never survive the voyage, and that he would pass some morning, shrouded in flag and hammock, over the ship's side, and carrying down to the sea with him, the relic that he wore at his heart. But whether it was the sea air, or the hope which sprang up in him afresh, from the day that the ship spread her canvass and stood out of the roads towards *home*, our friend began to amend, and he was quite well (though as gaunt as a greyhound) before they reached the Cape. "Kirk will be disappointed of his majority this time," he said with a smile: "he will expect to find himself gazetted by the time the regiment reaches home." For it must be premised that while the Major was lying ill at Madras, having made such a prodigious haste to go thither, the gallant —th which had passed many years abroad, which after its return from the West Indies had been baulked of its stay at home by the Waterloo campaign, and had been ordered from Flanders to India, had received orders home; and the Major might have accompanied his comrades, had he chosen to wait for their arrival at Madras.

Perhaps he was not inclined to put himself in his exhausted state again

under the guardianship of Glorvina. "I think Miss O'Dowd would have done for me," he said, laughingly, to a fellow-passenger, "if we had had her on board, and when she had sunk me, she would have fallen upon you, depend upon it, and carried you in as a prize to Southampton, Jos, my boy."

For indeed it was no other than our stout friend who was also a passenger on board the Ramchunder. He had passed ten years in Bengal.—Constant dinners, tiffins, pale ale and claret, the prodigious labours of cutcherry, and the refreshment of brandy-pawnee which he was forced to take there, had their effect upon Waterloo Sedley. A voyage to Europe was pronounced necessary for him—and having served his full time in India, and had fine appointments which had enabled him to lay by a considerable sum of money, he was free to come home and stay with a good pension, or to return and resume that rank in his service to which his seniority and his vast talents entitled him.

He was rather thinner than when we last saw him, but had gained in majesty and solemnity of demeanour. He had resumed the moustachios to which his services at Waterloo entitled him, and swaggered about on deck in a magnificent velvet cap with a gold band, and a profuse ornamentation of pins and jewellery about his person. He took breakfast in his cabin, and dressed as solemnly to appear on the quarter-deck, as if he was going to turn out for Bond Street, or the Course at Calcutta. He brought a native servant with him, who was his valet and pipe-bearer; and who wore the Sedley crest in silver on his turban. That oriental menial had a wretched life under the tyranny of Jos Sedley. Jos was as vain of his person as a woman, and took as long a time at his toilette as any fading beauty. The youngsters among the passengers, Young Chaffers of the 150th, and poor little Ricketts, coming home after his third fever, used to draw out Sedley at the cuddy-table, and make him tell prodigious stories about himself and his exploits against tigers and Napoleon. He was great when he visited the Emperor's tomb at Longwood, when to these gentlemen and the young officers of the ship, Major Dobbin not being by, he described the whole Battle of Waterloo, and all but announced that Napoleon never would have gone to Saint Helena at all but for him, Jos Sedley.

After leaving St. Helena he became very generous, disposing of a great quantity of ship stores, claret, preserved meats, and great casks packed with soda-water, brought out for his private delectation. There were no ladies on board; the Major gave the pas of precedency to the civilian, so that he was the first dignitary at table; and treated by Captain Bragg, and the officers of the Ramchunder, with the respect which his rank warranted. He disappeared rather in a panic during a two-days' gale, in which he had the portholes of his cabin battened down; and remained in his cot reading the Washerwoman of Finchley Common, left on board the Ramchunder by the Right Honourable the Lady Emily Hornblower, wife of the Rev. Silas Hornblower, then on their passage out to the Cape, where the Reverend gentleman was a missionary; but, for common reading, he had brought a stock of novels and plays which he lent to the rest of the ship, and rendered himself agreeable to all by his kindness and condescension.

Many and many a night, as the ship was cutting through the roaring dark sea, the moon and stars shining over head, and the bell singing out the watch, Mr. Sedley and the Major would sit on the quarter-deck of the vessel talking about home, as the Major smoked his cheroot, and the civilian puffed at the hookah which his servant prepared for him.

In these conversations it was wonderful with what perseverance and ingenuity Major Dobbin would manage to bring the talk round to the subject of Amelia and her little boy. Jos, a little testy about his father's misfortunes and unceremonious applications to him, was soothed down by the Major, who pointed out the elder's ill fortunes and old age. He would not perhaps like to live with the old couple: whose ways and hours might not agree with those of a younger man, accustomed to different

society, (Jos bowed at this compliment): but, the Major pointed out, how advantageous it would be for Jos Sedley to have a house of his own in London, and not a mere bachelor's establishment as before; how his sister Amelia would be the very person to preside over it; how elegant, how gentle she was, and of what refined good manners. He recounted stories of the success which Mrs. George Osborne had had in former days at Brussells, and in London, where she was much admired by people of very great fashion: and he then hinted how becoming it would be for Jos to send Georgy to a good school and make a man of him; for his mother and her parents would be sure to spoil him. In a word this artful Major made the civilian promise to take charge of Amelia and her unprotected child. He did not know as yet what events had happened in the little Sedley family; and how death had removed the mother, and riches had carried off George from Amelia. But the fact is that every day and always, this love-smitten and middle-aged gentleman was thinking about Mrs. Osborne, and his whole heart was bent upon doing her good. He coaxed, wheedled, cajoled, and complimented Jos Sedley with a perseverance and cordiality of which he was not aware himself, very likely: but some men who have unmarried sisters or daughters even, may remember how uncommonly agreeable gentlemen are to the male relations when they are courting the females; and perhaps this rogue of a Dobbin was urged by a similar hypocrisy.

The truth is, when Major Dobbin came on board the Ramchunder, very sick, and for the three days she lay in the Madras Roads, he did not begin to rally, nor did even the appearance and recognition of his old acquaintance, Mr. Sedley, on board much cheer him, until after a conversation which they had one day, as the Major was laid languidly on the deck. He said then he thought he was doomed; he had left a little something to his godson in his will; and he trusted Mrs. Osborne would remember him kindly, and be happy in the marriage she was about to make. "Married? not the least," Jos answered; "he had heard from her; she made no mention of the marriage, and by the way, it was curious, she wrote to say that Major Dobbin was going to be married, and hoped that *he* would be happy." What were the dates of Sedley's letters from Europe? The civilian fetched them. They were two months' later than the Major's; and the ship's surgeon congratulated himself upon the treatment adopted by him towards his new patient, who had been consigned to ship-board by the Madras practitioner with very small hopes indeed; for, from that day, the very day that he changed the draught, Major Dobbin began to mend. And thus it was that deserving officer, Captain Kirk, was disappointed of his majority.

After they passed St. Helena, Major Dobbin's gaiety and strength was such as to astonish all his fellow-passengers. He larked with the midshipmen, played single-stick with the mates, ran up the shrouds like a boy, sang a comic song one night to the amusement of the whole party assembled over their grog after supper, and rendered himself so gay, lively, and amiable, that even Captain Bragg, who thought there was nothing in his passenger, and considered he was a poor-spirited feller at first, was constrained to own that the Major was a reserved but well-informed and

meritorious officer. "He ain't got distangy manners, dammy," Bragg observed to his first mate; "he wouldn't do at Government House, Roper, where his Lordship and Lady William was as kind to me, and shook hands with me before the whole company, and asking me at dinner to take beer with him before the Commander-in-Chief himself; he ain't got manners, but there's something about him —." In which opinion Captain Bragg showed that he possessed discrimination as a man, as well as ability as a commander.

But a calm taking place when the Ramchunder was within ten days' sail of England, Dobbin became so impatient and ill-humoured as to surprise those comrades who had before admired his vivacity and good temper. He did not recover until the breeze sprang up again, and was in a highly excited state when the pilot came on board. Good God, how his heart beat as the two friendly spires of Southampton came in sight!

CHAPTER LVIII.

OUR FRIEND THE MAJOR.

OUR Major had rendered himself so popular on board the Ramchunder, that when he and Mr. Sedley descended into the welcome shore-boat which was to take them from the ship, the whole crew, men and officers, the great Captain Bragg himself leading off, gave three cheers for Major Dobbin, who blushed very much, and ducked his head in token of thanks. Jos who very likely thought the cheers were for himself, took off his gold-laced cap and waved it majestically to his friends, and they were pulled to shore and landed with great dignity at the pier, whence they proceeded to the Royal George Hotel.

Although the sight of that magnificent round of beef, and the silver tankard suggestive of real British home-brewed ale and porter, which perennially greet the eyes of the traveller returning from foreign parts, who enters the coffee-room of the George, are so invigorating and delightful, that a man entering such a comfortable snug homely English inn, might well like to stop some days there, yet Dobbin began to talk about a post-chaise instantly, and was no sooner at Southampton than he wished to be on the road to London. Jos, however, would not hear of moving that evening. Why was he to pass a night in a post-chaise instead of a great large undulating downy featherbed which was there ready to replace the horrid little narrow crib in which the portly Bengal gentleman had been confined during the voyage? He could not think of moving till his baggage was cleared, or of travelling until he could do so with his chillum. So the Major was forced to wait over that night, and dispatched a letter to his family announcing his arrival; entreating from Jos a promise to write to his own

friends. Jos promised, but didn't keep his promise. The Captain, the surgeon, and one or two passengers came and dined with our two gentlemen at the inn: Jos exerting himself in a sumptuous way in ordering the dinner: and promising to go to town the next day with the Major. The landlord said it did his eyes good to see Mr. Sedley take off his first pint of porter. If I had time and dared to enter into digressions, I would write a chapter about that first pint of porter drunk upon English ground. Ah, how good it is! It is worth while to leave home for a year, just to enjoy that one draught.

Major Dobbin made his appearance the next morning very neatly shaved and dressed, according to his wont. Indeed, it was so early in the morning, that nobody was up in the house except that wonderful Boots of an inn who never seems to want sleep: and the Major could hear the snores of the various inmates of the house roaring through the corridors as he creaked about in those dim passages. Then the sleepless Boots went shirking round from door to door, gathering up at each the Bluchers, Wellingtons, Oxonians, which stood outside. Then Jos's native servant arose and began to get ready his master's ponderous dressing apparatus, and prepare his hookah: then the maid servants got up, and meeting the dark man in the passages shrieked and mistook him for the devil. He and Dobbin stumbled over their pails in the passages as they were scouring the decks of the Royal George. When the first unshorn waiter appeared and unbarred the door of the inn, the Major thought that the time for departure was arrived, and ordered a post-chaise to be fetched instantly, that they might set off.

He then directed his steps to Mr. Sedley's room, and opened the curtains of the great large family bed wherein Mr. Jos was snoring. "Come, up! Sedley," the Major said, "it's time to be off; the chaise will be at the door in half an hour."

Jos growled from under the counterpane to know what the time was; but when he at last extorted from the blushing Major (who never told fibs, however much they might be to his advantage) what was the real hour of the morning, he broke out into a volley of bad language, which we will not repeat here, but by which he gave Dobbin to understand that he would jeopardy his soul if he got up at that moment, that the Major might go and be hanged, that he would not travel with Dobbin, and that it was most unkind and ungentlemanlike to disturb a man out of his sleep in that way: on which the discomfited Major was obliged to retreat, leaving Jos to resume his interrupted slumbers.

The chaise came up presently, and the Major would wait no longer.

If he had been an English nobleman travelling on a pleasure tour; or a newspaper courier, bearing dispatches, (government messages are generally carried much more quietly) he could not have travelled more quickly. The post boys wondered at the fees he flung amongst them. How happy and green the country looked as the chaise whirled rapidly from mile-stone to mile-stone, through neat country towns where landlords came out to welcome him with smiles and bows; by pretty road-side inns, where the signs hung on the elms, and horses and waggoners were drinking under the chequered shadow of the trees; by old halls and

parks; rustic hamlets clustered round ancient grey churches—and through the charming friendly English landscape. Is there any in the world like it? To a traveller returning home it looks so kind—it seems to shake hands with you as you pass through it.—Well, Major Dobbin passed over all this through from Southampton to London, and without noting much beyond the mile-stones along the road.—You see he was so eager to see his parents at Camberwell.

He grudged the time lost between Piccadilly and his old haunt at the Slaughter's, whither he drove faithfully. Long years had passed since he saw it last, since he and George, as young men, had enjoyed many a feast, and held many a revel there. He had now passed into the stage of old-fellow-hood. His hair was grizzled, and many a passion and feeling of his youth had grown grey in that interval. There, however, stood the old waiter at the door in the same greasy black suit, with the same double chin and flaccid face, with the same huge bunch of seals at his fob, rattling his money in his pockets as before, and receiving the Major as if he had gone away only a week ago. "Put the Major's things in twenty-three, that's his room," John said, exhibiting not the least surprise. "Roast fowl for your dinner I suppose. You ain't got married? They said you was married—the Scotch surgeon of your's was here. No, it was Captain Humby of the thirty-third, as was quartered with the —th in Injee. Like any warm water? What do you come in a chay for, ain't the coach good enough?" And with this, the faithful waiter, who knew and remembered every officer who used the house, and with whom ten years were but as yesterday, led the way up to Dobbin's old room, where stood the great moreen bed, and the shabby carpet, a thought more dingy, and all the old black furniture covered with faded chintz, just as the Major recollected them in his youth.

He remembered George pacing up and down the room, and biting his nails, and swearing that the Governor must come round, and that if he didn't, he didn't care a straw, on the day before he was married. He could fancy him walking in, banging the door of Dobbin's room, and his own hard by—

"You ain't got young," John said, calmly surveying his friend of former days.

Dobbin laughed. "Ten years and a fever don't make a man young, John," he said. "It is you that are always young:—No, you are always old."

"What became of Captain Osborne's widow," John said. "Fine young fellow that. Lord how he used to spend his money. He never came back after that day he was married from here. He owes me three pound at this minute. Look here, I have it in my book. April 10, 1815, Captain Osborne: £3. I wonder whether his father would pay me," and so saying, John of the Slaughter's pulled out the very morocco pocket-book in which he had noted his loan to the Captain, upon a greasy faded page still extant, with many other scrawled memoranda regarding the bygone frequenters of the house.

Having inducted his customer into the room, John retired with perfect calmness; and Major Dobbin, not without a blush and a grin at his own

absurdity, chose out of his kit the very smartest and most becoming civil costume he possessed, and laughed at his own tanned face and grey hair as he surveyed them in the dreary little toilet-glass on the dressing table.

"I'm glad old John didn't forget me," he thought. "She'll know me, too, I hope." And he sallied out of the inn, bending his steps once more in the direction of Brompton.

Every minute incident of his last meeting with Amelia was present to the constant man's mind as he walked towards her house. The arch and the Achilles statue were up since he had last been in Piccadilly; a hundred changes had occurred which his eye and mind vaguely noted. He began to tremble as he walked up the lane from Brompton, that well remembered lane leading to the street where she lived. Was she going to be married or not? If he were to meet her with the little boy—Good God, what should he do? He saw a woman coming to him with a child of five years old—was that she? He began to shake at the mere possibility. When he came up to the row of houses, at last, where she lived, and to the gate, he caught hold of it and paused. He might have heard the thumping of his own heart. "May God Almighty bless her, whatever has happened," he thought to himself. "Psha! she may be gone from here," he said, and went in through the gate.

The window of the parlour which she used to occupy was open, and there were no inmates in the room. The Major thought he recognised the piano though, with the picture over it, as it used to be in former days, and his perturbations were renewed. Mr. Clapp's brass plate was still on the door; at the knocker of which Dobbin performed a summons.

A buxom-looking lass of sixteen, with bright eyes and purple cheeks, came to answer the knock, and looked hard at the Major as he lent back against the little porch.

He was as pale as a ghost, and could hardly falter out the words—"Does Mrs. Osborne live here?"

She looked him hard in the face for a moment—and then turning white too—said "Lord bless me—it's Major Dobbin." She held out both her hands shaking—"Don't you remember me?" she said, "I used to call you Major Sugarplums. On which, and I believe it was for the first time that he ever so conducted himself in his life, the Major took the girl in his arms and kissed her. She began to laugh and cry hysterically, and calling out "Ma, Pa!" with all her voice, brought up those worthy people, who had already been surveying the Major from the casement of the ornamental kitchen, and were astonished to find their daughter in the little passage in the embrace of a great tall man in a blue frock coat and white duck trowsers.

"I'm an old friend," he said—not without blushing though. "Don't you remember me, Mrs. Clapp, and those good cakes you used to make for tea?—Don't you recollect me, Clapp? I'm George's godfather, and just come back from India?" A great shaking of hands ensued—Mrs. Clapp was greatly affected and delighted; she called upon heaven to interpose a vast many times in that passage.

The landlord and landlady of the house led the worthy Major into the Sedleys' room (whereof he remembered every single article of furniture, from the old brass ornamented piano, once a natty little instrument, Stothard maker, to the screens and the alabaster miniature-tombstone, in the midst of which ticked Mr. Sedley's gold watch), and there as he sat down in the lodger's vacant arm-chair, the father, the mother, and the daughter, with a thousand ejaculatory breaks in the narrative, informed Major Dobbin of what we know already, but of particulars in Amelia's history of which he was not aware—namely, of Mrs. Sedley's death, of George's reconcilement with his grandfather Osborne, of the way in which the widow took on at leaving him, and of other particulars of her life. Twice or thrice he was going to ask about the marriage-portion, but his heart failed him. He did not care to lay it bare to these people. Finally, he was informed that Mrs. O. was gone to walk with her Pa in Kensington Gardens, whither she always went with the old gentleman (who was very weak and peevish now, and led her a sad life, though she behaved to him like an angel, to be sure,) of a fine afternoon after dinner.

"I 'm very much pressed for time," the Major said, "and have business to-night of importance. I should like to see Mrs. Osborne tho'. Suppose Miss Polly would come with me and show me the way."

Miss Polly was charmed and astonished at this proposal. "She knew the way. She would show Major Dobbin. She had often been with Mr. Sedley when Mrs. O. was gone—was gone Russell Square way: and knew the bench where he liked to sit." She bounced away to her apartment, and appeared presently in her best bonnet and her mamma's yellow shawl and large pebble brooch, of which she assumed the loan in order to make herself a worthy companion for the Major.

That officer, then in his blue frock-coat and buckskin gloves, gave the young lady his arm, and they walked away very gaily. He was glad to have a friend at hand for the scene which he dreaded somehow. He asked a thousand more questions from his companion about Amelia: his kind heart grieved to think that she should have had to part with her son. How did she bear it? Did she see him often? Was Mr. Sedley pretty comfortable now in a worldly point of view? Polly answered all these questions of Major Sugarplums to the very best of her power.

And in the midst of their walk an incident occurred which, though very simple in its nature, was productive of the greatest delight to Major Dobbin. A pale young man with feeble whiskers and a stiff white neckcloth came walking down the lane, *en sandwich*:—having a lady, that is, on each arm. One was a tall and commanding middle-aged female, with features and a complexion similar to those of the clergyman of the Church of England by whose side she marched, and the other a stunted little woman with a dark face, ornamented by a fine new bonnet and white ribbons, and in a smart pelisse with a rich gold watch in the midst of her person. The gentleman, pinioned as he was by these two ladies, carried further a parasol, shawl, and basket, so that his arms were entirely engaged, and of course he was unable to touch his hat in acknowledgment of the curtsey with which Miss Mary Clapp greeted him.

He meekly bowed his head in reply to her salutation, which the two

ladies returned in a patronising air, and at the same time looking severely at the individual in the blue coat and bamboo cane, who accompanied Miss Polly.

"Who's that," asked the Major, amused by the group, and after he had made way for the three to pass up the lane. Mary looked at him rather roguishly.

"That is our curate, the Reverend Mr. Binney, (a twitch from Major Dobbin), and his sister Miss B. Lord bless us, how she did use to worret us at Sunday-school; and the other lady, the little one with a cast in her eye, and the handsome watch, is Mrs. Binney—Miss Grits that was; her Pa was a grocer, and kept the Little Original Gold Tea Pot in Kensington Gravel Pits. They were married last month, and are just come back from Margate. She's five thousand pound to her fortune; but her and Miss B., who made the match, have quarrelled already."

If the Major had twitched before, he started now, and slapped the bamboo on the ground with an emphasis which made Miss Clapp cry, "Law," and laugh too. He stood for a moment silent with open mouth looking after the retreating young couple, while Miss Mary told their history; but he did not hear beyond the announcement of the reverend gentleman's marriage; his head was swimming with felicity. After this rencontre he began to walk double quick towards the place of his destination; and yet they were too soon (for he was in a great tremor at the idea of a meeting for which he had been longing any time these ten years)—through the Brompton lanes, and entering at the little old portal in Kensington Garden wall.

"There they are," said Miss Polly," and she felt him again start back on her arm. She was a confidante at once of the whole business. She knew the story as well as if she had read it in one of her favourite novel-books—"Fatherless Fanny," or the "Scottish Chiefs."

"Suppose you were to run on and tell her," the Major said. Polly ran forward, her yellow shawl streaming in the breeze.

Old Sedley was seated on a bench, his handkerchief placed over his knees, prattling away according to his wont, with some old story about old times, to which Amelia had listened, and awarded a patient smile many a time before. She could of late think of her own affairs, and smile or make other marks of recognition of her father's stories, without scarcely hearing a word of the old man's tales. As Mary came bouncing along, and Amelia caught sight of her, she started up from her bench. Her first thought was, that something had happened to Georgy; but the sight of the messenger's eager and happy face dissipated that fear in the timorous mother's bosom.

"News! News!" cried the emissary of Major Dobbin. "He's come! He's come!"

"Who is come?" said Emmy, still thinking of her son.

"Look there," answered Miss Clapp, turning round and pointing; in which direction Amelia looking, saw Dobbin's lean figure and long shadow stalking across the grass. Amelia started in her turn, blushed up, and, of course, began to cry. At all this simple little creature's fêtes, the *grandes eaux* were accustomed to play.

He looked at her—oh, how fondly—as she came running towards him, her hands before her, ready to give them to him. She was 'nt changed. She was a little pale: a little stouter in figure. Her eyes were the same, the kind trustful eyes. There were scarce three lines of silver in her soft brown hair. She gave him both her hands as she looked up flushing and smiling through her tears into his honest homely face. He took the two little hands between his two, and held them there. He was speechless for a moment. Why did he not take her in his arms, and swear that he would never leave her? She must have yielded: she could not but have obeyed him.

"I—I 've another arrival to announce," he said, after a pause.

"Mrs. Dobbin?" Amelia said, making a movement back—Why didn't he speak?

"No," he said, letting her hands go: "Who has told you those lies? —I mean, your brother Jos came in the same ship with me, and is come home to make you all happy."

"Papa, papa!" Emmy cried out, "here are news! My brother is in England. He is come to take care of you.—Here is Major Dobbin."

Mr. Sedley started up, shaking a great deal, and gathering up his thoughts. Then he stepped forward and made an old-fashioned bow to the Major, whom he called Mr. Dobbin, and hoped his worthy father, Sir William, was quite well. He proposed to call upon Sir William, who had done him the honour of a visit a short time ago. Sir William had not called upon the old gentleman for eight years—it was that visit he was thinking of returning.

"He is very much shaken," Emmy whispered, as Dobbin went up and cordially shook hands with the old man.

Although he had such particular business in London that evening, the Major consented to forego it upon Mr. Sedley's invitation to him to come home and partake of tea. Amelia put her arm under that of her young friend with the yellow shawl, and headed the party on their return homewards, so that Mr. Sedley fell to Dobbin's share. The old man walked very slowly, and told a number of ancient histories about himself and his poor Bessy, his former prosperity, and his bankruptcy. His thoughts, as is usual with failing old men, were quite in former times. The past, with the exception of the one catastrophe which he felt, he knew little about. The Major was glad to let him talk on. His eyes were fixed upon the figure in front of him—the dear little figure always present to his imagination and in his prayers, and visiting his dreams wakeful or slumbering.

Amelia was very happy, smiling, and active all that evening; performing her duties as hostess of the little entertainment with the utmost grace and propriety, as Dobbin thought. His eyes followed her about as they sate in the twilight. How many a time had he longed for that moment, and thought of her far away under hot winds and in weary marches, gentle and happy, kindly ministering to the wants of old age, and decorating poverty with sweet submission—as he saw her now. I do not say that his taste was the highest or that it is the duty of great intellects to be content with a bread-and-butter paradise, such as sufficed our simple old friend; but

his desires were of this sort whether for good or bad; and, with Amelia to help him, he was as ready to drink as many cups of tea as Doctor Johnson.

Amelia seeing this propensity, laughingly encouraged it; and looked exceedingly roguish as she administered to him cup after cup. It is true she did not know that the Major had had no dinner, and that the cloth was laid for him at the Slaughter's, and a plate laid thereon to mark that the table was retained, in that very box in which the Major and George had sate many a time carousing, when she was a child just come home from Miss Pinkerton's school.

The first thing Mrs. Osborne showed the Major was Georgy's miniature, for which she ran up stairs on her arrival at home. It was not half handsome enough of course for the boy, but wasn't it noble of him to think of bringing it to his mother? Whilst her papa was awake she did not talk much about Georgy. To hear about Mr. Osborne and Russell Square was not agreeable to the old man, who very likely was unconscious that he had been living for some months past mainly on the bounty of his richer rival; and lost his temper if allusion was made to the other.

Dobbin told him all, and a little more perhaps than all, that had happened on board the Ramchunder; and exaggerated Jos's benevolent dispositions towards his father, and resolution to make him comfortable in his old days. The truth is that during the voyage the Major had impressed this duty most strongly upon his fellow-passenger and extorted promises from him that he would take charge of his sister and her child. He soothed Jos's irritation with regard to the bills which the old gentleman had drawn upon him, gave a laughing account of his own sufferings on the same score, and of the famous consignment of wine with which the old man had favoured him: and brought Mr. Jos, who was by no means an ill-natured person when well pleased and moderately flattered, to a very good state of feeling regarding his relatives in Europe.

And in fine I am ashamed to say that the Major stretched the truth so far as to tell old Mr. Sedley that it was mainly a desire to see his parent which brought Jos once more to Europe.

At his accustomed hour Mr. Sedley began to dose in his chair, and then it was Amelia's opportunity to commence her conversation which she did with great eagerness;—it related exclusively to Georgy. She did not talk at all about her own sufferings at breaking from him, for indeed this worthy woman, though she was half-killed by the separation from the child, yet thought it was very wicked in her to repine at losing him; but everything concerning him, his virtues, talents, and prospects, she poured out. She described his angelic beauty; narrated a hundred instances of his generosity and greatness of mind whilst living with her: how a Royal Duchess had stopped and admired him in Kensington Gardens; how splendidly he was cared for now, and how he had a groom and a pony; what quickness and cleverness he had, and what a prodigiously well-read and delightful person the Reverend Lawrence Veal was, George's master. "He knows *everything*," Amelia said. "He has the most delightful parties. You who are so learned yourself, and have read so much, and are so clever and accomplished—don't shake your head and say no—*He* always used to say you were—you will be charmed with

Mr. Veal's parties. The last Tuesday in every month. He says there is no place in the bar or the senate that Georgy may not aspire to. Look here," and she went to the piano-drawer and drew out a theme of Georgy's composition. This great effort of genius, which is still in the possession of George's mother, is as follows:

On Selfishness.—Of all the vices which degrade the human character, Selfishness is the most odious and contemptible. An undue love of Self leads to the most monstrous crimes; and occasions the greatest misfortunes both in *States and Families.* As a selfish man will impoverish his family and often bring them to ruin: so a selfish king brings ruin on his people and often plunges them into war.

Example: The selfishness of Achilles, as remarked by the poet Homer, occasioned a thousand woes to the Greeks—*μυρί' Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε*—(Hom. Il. A. 2). The selfishness of the late Napoleon Bonaparte occasioned innumerable wars in Europe, and caused him to perish, himself, in a miserable island—that of Saint Helena in the Atlantic Ocean.

We see by these examples that we are not to consult our own interest and ambition, but that we are to consider the interests of others as well as our own.

GEORGE S. OSBORNE.

Athenè House, 24 *April*, 1827.

"Think of him writing such a hand, and quoting Greek too, at his age," the delighted mother said. "O William," she added, holding out her hand to the Major—"what a treasure Heaven has given me in that boy! He is the comfort of my life—and he is the image of—of him that's gone!"

"Ought I to be angry with her for being faithful to him?" William thought. "Ought I to be jealous of my friend in the grave, or hurt that such a heart as Amelia's can love only once and for ever? Oh, George, George, how little you knew the prize you had, though." This sentiment passed rapidly through William's mind, as he was holding Amelia's hand, whilst the handkerchief was veiling her eyes.

"Dear friend," she said, pressing the hand which held hers, "How good, how kind you always have been to me! See! Papa is stirring. You will go and see Georgy to-morrow, won't you?"

"Not to-morrow," said poor old Dobbin. "I have business." He did not like to own that he had not as yet been to his parents' and his dear sister Anne—a remissness for which I am sure every well-regulated person will blame the Major. And presently he took his leave, leaving his address behind him for Jos, against the latter's arrival. And so the first day was over, and he had seen her.

When he got back to the Slaughter's, the roast fowl was of course cold, in which condition he ate it for supper. And knowing what early hours his family kept, and that it would be needless to disturb their slumbers at so late an hour, it is on record, that Major Dobbin treated himself to half-price at the Haymarket Theatre that evening, where let us hope he enjoyed himself.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE OLD PIANO.

THE Major's visit left old John Sedley in a great state of agitation and excitement. His daughter could not induce him to settle down to his customary occupations or amusements that night. He passed the evening fumbling amongst his boxes and desks, untying his papers with trembling hands, and sorting and arranging them against Jos's arrival. He had them in the greatest order—his tapes and his files, his receipts, and his letters with lawyers and correspondents; the documents relative to the Wine Project (which failed from a most unaccountable accident, after commencing with the most splendid prospects), the Coal Project (which only a want of capital prevented from becoming the most successful scheme ever put before the public), the Patent Saw-mills and Sawdust Consolidation Project, &c. &c.—All night, until a very late hour, he passed in the preparation of these documents, trembling about from one room to another, with a quivering candle and shaky hands.—Here's the wine papers, here's the sawdust, here's the coals; here's my letters to Calcutta and Madras, and replies from Major Dobbin, C. B., and Mr. Joseph Osborne to the same. "He shall find no irregularity about *me*, Emmy," the old gentleman said.

Emmy smiled. "I don't think Jos will care about seeing those papers, Papa," she said.

"You don't know anything about business, my dear," answered the sire, shaking his head with an important air. And it must be confessed, that on this point Emmy was very ignorant, and that is a pity, some people are so knowing. All these twopenny documents arranged on a side table,

old Sedley covered them carefully over with a clean bandanna handkerchief, (one out of Major Dobbin's lot), and enjoined the maid and landlady of the house, in the most solemn way, not to disturb those papers, which were arranged for the arrival of Mr. Joseph Sedley the next morning, "Mr. Joseph Sedley of the Honourable East India Company's Bengal Civil Service."

Amelia found him up very early the next morning, more eager, more hectic, and more shaky than ever. "I didn't sleep much, Emmy, my dear," he said. "I was thinking of my poor Bessy. I wish she was alive, to ride in Jos's carriage once again. She kept her own, and became it very well." And his eyes filled with tears, which trickled down his furrowed old face. Amelia wiped them away, and smilingly kissed him,

and tied the old man's neckcloth in a smart bow, and put his brooch into his best shirt frill, in which, in his Sunday suit of mourning, he sat from six o'clock in the morning awaiting the arrival of his son.

There are some splendid tailors' shops in the High Street of Southampton,

in the fine plate-glass windows of which hang gorgeous waistcoats of all sorts, of silk and velvet, and gold and crimson, and pictures of the last new fashions in which those wonderful gentlemen with quizzing glasses, and holding on to little boys with the exceeding large eyes and curly hair, ogle ladies in riding habits prancing by the Statue of Achilles at Apsley House. Jos, although provided with some of the most splendid vests that Calcutta could furnish, thought he could not go to town until he was supplied with one or two of these garments, and selected a crimson satin, embroidered with gold butterflies, and a black and red velvet tartan with white stripes and a rolling collar, with which, and a rich blue satin stock and a gold pin, consisting of a five-barred gate with a horseman in pink enamel jumping over it, he thought he might make his entry into London with some dignity. For Jos's former shyness and blundering blushing timidity had given way to a more candid and courageous self-assertion of his worth. "I don't care about owning it," Waterloo Sedley would say to his friends, "I am a dressy man:" and though rather uneasy if the ladies looked at him at the Government House balls, and though he blushed and turned away alarmed under their glances, it was chiefly from a dread lest they should make love to him, that he avoided them, being averse to marriage altogether. But there was no such swell in Calcutta as Waterloo Sedley, I have heard say: and he had the handsomest turn-out, gave the best bachelor dinners, and had the finest plate in the whole place.

To make these waiscoats for a man of his size and dignity took at least a day, part of which he employed in hiring a servant to wait upon him and his native; and in instructing the agent who cleared his baggage, his boxes, his books, which he never read; his chests of mangoes, chutney, and currie-powders; his shawls for presents to people whom he didn't know as yet; and the rest of his *Persicos apparatus.*

At length, he drove leisurely to London on the third day, and in the new waistcoat. The native, with chattering teeth, shuddering in a shawl on the box by the side of the new European servant, Jos puffing his pipe at intervals within, and looking so majestic, that little boys cried Hooray, and many people thought he must be a Governor-General. *He*, I promise, did not decline the obsequious invitation of the landlords to alight and refresh himself in the neat country towns. Having partaken of a copious breakfast, with fish, and rice, and hard eggs, at Southampton, he had so far rallied at Winchester as to think a glass of sherry necessary. At Alton he stepped out of the carriage, at his servant's request, and imbibed some of the ale for which the place is famous. At Farnham he stopped to view the Bishop's Castle, and to partake of a light dinner of stewed eels, veal cutlets, and French beans, with a bottle of claret. He was cold over Bagshot Heath, where the native chattered more and more, and Jos Sahib took some brandy-and-water; in fact, when he drove into town, he was as full of wine, beer, meat, pickles, cherry-brandy, and tobacco, as the steward's cabin of a steam-packet. It was evening when his carriage thundered up to the little door in Brompton, whither the affectionate fellow drove first, and before hying to the apartments secured for him by Mr. Dobbin at the Slaughter's.

All the faces in the street were in the windows; the little maid-servant flew to the wicket-gate, the Mesdames Clapp looked out from the casement of the ornamented kitchen; Emmy, in a great flutter, was in the passage among the hats and coats, and old Sedley in the parlour inside, shaking all over. Jos descended from the post-chaise and down the creaking swaying steps in awful state, supported by the new valet from Southampton and the shuddering native, whose brown face was now livid with cold, and of the colour of a turkey's gizzard. He created an immense sensation in the passage presently, where Mrs. and Miss Clapp, coming perhaps to listen at the parlour door, found Loll Jewab shaking upon the hall-bench under the coats, moaning in a strange piteous way, and showing his yellow eyeballs and white teeth.

For, you see, we have adroitly shut the door upon the meeting between Jos and the old father, and the poor little gentle sister inside. The old man was very much affected: so, of course, was his daughter: nor was Jos without feeling. In that long absence of ten years, the most selfish will think about home and early ties. Distance sanctifies both. Long brooding over those lost pleasures exaggerates their charm and sweetness. Jos was unaffectedly glad to see and shake the hand of his father, between whom and himself there had been a coolness—glad to see his little sister, whom he remembered so pretty and smiling, and pained at the alteration which time, grief, and misfortune had made in the shattered old man. Emmy had come out to the door in her black clothes and whispered to him of her mother's death, and not to speak of it to their father. There was no need of this caution, for the elder Sedley himself began immediately to speak of the event, and prattled about it, and wept over it plenteously. It shocked the Indian not a little, and made him think of himself less than the poor fellow was accustomed to do.

The result of the interview must have been very satisfactory, for when Jos had reascended his post-chaise, and had driven away to his hotel, Emmy embraced her father tenderly, appealing to him with an air of triumph, and asking the old man whether she did not always say that her brother had a good heart?

Indeed, Joseph Sedley, affected by the humble position in which he found his relations, and in the expansiveness and overflowing of heart occasioned by the first meeting, declared that they should never suffer want or discomfort any more, that he was at home for some time at any rate, during which his house and everything he had should be theirs; and that Amelia would look very pretty at the head of his table—until she would accept one of her own.

She shook her head sadly, and had, as usual, recourse to the water-works. She knew what he meant. She and her young confidante, Miss Mary, had talked over the matter most fully, the very night of the Major's visit; beyond which time the impetuous Polly could not refrain from talking of the discovery which she had made, and describing the start and tremor of joy by which Major Dobbin betrayed himself when Mr. Binney passed with his bride, and the Major learned that he had no longer a rival to fear. "Didn't you see how he shook all over when you asked

if he was married, and he said, 'Who told you those lies?' O Ma'am," Polly said, "he never kept his eyes off you; and I 'm sure he 's grown grey a-thinking of you."

But Amelia, looking up at her bed, over which hung the portraits of her husband and son, told her young *protegée*, never, never, to speak on that subject again; that Major Dobbin had been her husband's dearest friend, and her own and George's most kind and affectionate guardian; that she loved him as a brother—but that a woman who had been married to such an angel as that, and she pointed to the wall, could never think of any other union. Poor Polly sighed: she thought what she should do if young Mr. Tomkins, at the Surgery, who always looked at her so at church, and who, by those mere aggressive glances had put her timorous little heart into such a flutter that she was ready to surrender at once,—what she should do if he were to die? She knew he was consumptive, his checks were so red, and he was so uncommon thin in the waist.

Not that Emmy, being made aware of the honest Major's passion, rebuffed him in any way, or felt displeased with him. Such an attachment from so true and loyal a gentleman could make no woman angry. Desdemona was not angry with Cassio, though there is very little doubt she saw the Lieutenant's partiality for her (and I for my part believe that many more things took place in that sad affair than the worthy Moorish officer ever knew of); why, Miranda was even very kind to Caliban, and we may be pretty sure for the same reason. Not that she would encourage him in the least,—the poor uncouth monster—of course not. No more would Emmy by any means encourage her admirer, the Major. She would give him that friendly regard, which so much excellence and fidelity merited; she would treat him with perfect cordiality and frankness until he made his proposals; and *then* it would be time enough for her to speak, and to put an end to hopes which never could be realised.

She slept, therefore, very soundly that evening, after the conversation with Miss Polly, and was more than ordinarily happy, in spite of Jos's delaying. "I am glad he is not going to marry that Miss O'Dowd," she thought. "Colonel O'Dowd never could have a sister fit for such an accomplished man as Major William." Who was there amongst her little circle, who would make him a good wife? Not Miss Binney, she was too old and ill-tempered; Miss Osborne?—too old too. Little Polly was too young. Mrs. Osborne could not find anybody to suit the Major before she went to sleep.

However when the postman made his appearance, the little party were put out of suspense, by the receipt of a letter from Jos to his sister, who announced, that he felt a little fatigued after his voyage, and should not be able to move on that day, but that he would leave Southampton early the next morning, and be with his father and mother at evening. Amelia as she read out the letter to her father, paused over the latter word; her brother, it was clear, did not know what had happened in the family. Nor could he: for the fact is that though the Major rightly suspected that his travelling companion never would be got into motion in so short a space as twenty-four hours, and would find some excuse for delaying, yet Dobbin had not written to Jos to inform him of the calamity which had

befallen the Sedley family: being occupied in talking with Amelia until long after post-hour.

The same morning brought Major Dobbin a letter to the Slaughter's Coffee House from his friend at Southampton; begging dear Dob to excuse Jos for being in a rage when awakened the day before (he had a confounded head-ache, and was just in his first sleep), and entreating Dob to engage comfortable rooms at the Slaughter's for Mr. Sedley and his servants. The Major had become necessary to Jos during the voyage. He was attached to him, and hung upon him. The other passengers were away to London. Young Ricketts and little Chaffers went away on the coach that day—Ricketts on the box, and taking the reins from Botley; the Doctor was off to his family at Portsea; Bragg gone to town to his co-partners; and the first mate busy in the unloading of the Ramchunder. Mr. Jos was very lonely at Southampton, and got the landlord of the George to take a glass of wine with him that day; at the very hour at which Major Dobbin was seated at the table of his father, Sir William, where his sister found out (for it was impossible for the Major to tell fibs) that he had been to see Mrs. George Osborne.

Jos was so comfortably situated in Saint Martin's Lane, he could enjoy his hookah there with such perfect ease, and could swagger down to the theatres, when minded, so agreeably, that, perhaps, he would have remained altogether at the Slaughter's had not his friend, the Major, been at his elbow. That gentleman would not let the Bengalee rest until he had executed his promise of having a home for Amelia and his father. Jos was a soft fellow in anybody's hands; Dobbin most active in anybody's concerns but his own; the civilian was, therefore, an easy victim to the guileless arts of this good-natured diplomatist, and was ready to do, to purchase, hire, or relinquish whatever his friend thought fit. Loll Jewab, of whom the boys about Saint Martin's Lane used to make cruel fun whenever he showed his dusky countenance in the street, was sent back to Calcutta in the Lady Kicklebury East Indiaman, in which Sir William Dobbin had a share; having previously taught Jos's European the art of preparing curries, pilaws, and pipes. It was a matter of great delight and occupation to Jos to superintend the building of a smart chariot, which he and the Major ordered in the neighbouring Long Acre: and a pair of handsome horses were jobbed, with which Jos drove about in state in the Park, or to call upon his Indian friends. Amelia was not seldom by his side on these excursions, when also Major Dobbin would be seen in the back seat of the carriage. At other times Old Sedley and his daughter took advantage of it: and Miss Clapp, who frequently accompanied her friend, had great pleasure in being recognised as she sate in the carriage, dressed in the famous yellow shawl, by the young gentleman at the surgery, whose face might commonly be seen over the window-blinds as she passed.

Shortly after Jos's first appearance at Brompton, a dismal scene, indeed, took place at that humble cottage, at which the Sedleys had passed the last ten years of their life. Jos's carriage (the temporary one, not the chariot under construction) arrived one day and carried off old Sedley and his daughter—to return no more. The tears that were shed by the

landlady and the landlady's daughter at that event were as genuine tears of sorrow as any that have been outpoured in the course of this history In their long acquaintanceship and intimacy they could not recall a harsh word that had been uttered by Amelia. She had been all sweetness and kindness, always thankful, always gentle, even when Mrs. Clapp lost her own temper, and pressed for the rent. When the kind creature was going away for good and all, the landlady reproached herself bitterly for ever having used a rough expression to her—how she wept, as they stuck up with wafers on the window, a paper notifying that the little rooms so long occupied were to let! They never would have such lodgers again, that was quite clear. After-life proved the truth of this melancholy prophecy: and Mrs. Clapp revenged herself for the deterioration of mankind by levying the most savage contributions upon the tea-caddies and legs of mutton of her *locataires*. Most of them scolded and grumbled; some of them did not pay: none of them stayed. The landlady might well regret those old, old friends, who had left her.

As for Miss Mary, her sorrow at Amelia's departure was such as I shall not attempt to depict. From childhood upwards she had been with her daily, and had attached herself so passionately to that dear good lady, that when the grand barouche came to carry her off into splendour, she fainted in the arms of her friend, who was indeed scarcely less affected than the good-natured girl. Amelia loved her like a daughter. During eleven years the girl had been her constant friend and associate. The separation was a very painful one indeed to her. But it was of course arranged that Mary was to come and stay often at the grand new house whither Mrs. Osborne was going; and where Mary was sure she would never be so happy as she had been in their humble cot as Miss Clapp called it in the language of the novels which she loved.

Let us hope she was wrong in her judgment. Poor Emmy's days of happiness had been very few in that humble cot. A gloomy Fate had oppressed her there. She never liked to come back to the house after she had left it, or to face the landlady who had tyrannised over her when ill-humoured and unpaid; or when pleased had treated her with a coarse familiarity scarcely less odious. Her servility and fulsome compliments when Emmy was in prosperity were not more to that lady's liking. She cast about notes of admiration all over the new house, extolling every article of furniture or ornament; she fingered Mrs. Osborne's dresses, and calculated their price. Nothing could be too good for that sweet lady, she vowed and protested. But in the vulgar sycophant who now paid court to her, Emmy always remembered the coarse tyrant who had made her miserable many a time to whom she had been forced to put up petitions for time, when the rent was overdue; who cried out at her extravagance if she bought delicacies for her ailing mother or father; who had seen her humble and trampled upon her.

Nobody ever heard of these griefs, which had been part of our poor little woman's lot in life. She kept them secret from her father, whose improvidence was the cause of much of her misery. She had to bear all the blame of his misdoings, and indeed was so utterly gentle and humble as to be made by nature for a victim.

I hope she is not to suffer much more of that hard usage. And, as in all griefs, there is said to be some consolation, I may mention that poor Mary, when left at her friend's departure in a hysterical condition, was placed under the medical treatment of the young fellow from the surgery, under whose care she rallied after a short period. Emmy, when she went away from Brompton, endowed Mary with every article of furniture that the house contained: only taking away her pictures (the two pictures over the bed) and her piano—that little old piano which had now passed into a plaintive jingling old age, but which she loved for reasons of her own. She was a child when first she played on it: and her parents gave it her. It had been given to her again since, as the reader may remember, when her father's house was gone to ruin, and the instrument was recovered out of the wreck.

Major Dobbin was exceedingly pleased when, as he was superintending the arrangements of Jos's new house, which the Major insisted should be very handsome and comfortable; the cart arrived from Brompton, bringing the trunks and band-boxes of the emigrants from that village, and with them the old piano. Amelia would have it up in her sitting-room, a neat little apartment on the second floor, adjoining her father's chamber: and where the old gentleman sate commonly of evenings.

When the men appeared then bearing this old music-box, and Amelia gave orders that it should be placed in the chamber aforesaid, Dobbin was quite elated. "I 'm glad you 've kept it," he said in a very sentimental manner. "I was afraid you did'nt care about it."

"I value it more than anything I have in the world," said Amelia.

"*Do* you, Amelia?" cried the Major. The fact was, as he had bought it himself, though he never said anything about it, it never entered into his head to suppose that Emmy should think anybody else was the purchaser, and as a matter of couse, he fancied that she knew the gift came from him. "Do you, Amelia?" he said; and the question, the great question of all, was trembling on his lips, when Emmy replied—

"Can I do otherwise?—did not *he* give it me?"

"I did not know," said poor old Dob, and his countenance fell.

Emmy did not note the circumstance at the time, nor take immediate heed of the very dismal expression which honest Dobbin's countenance assumed; but she thought of it afterwards. And then it struck her, with inexpressible pain and mortification too, that it was William who was the giver of the piano; and not George, as she had fancied. It was not George's gift; the only one which she had received from her lover, as she thought—the thing she had cherished beyond all others—her dearest relic and prize. She had spoken to it about George; played his favourite airs upon it; sate for long evening hours, touching, to the best of her simple art, melancholy harmonies on the keys, and weeping over them in silence. It was not George's relic. It was valueless now. The next time that old Sedley asked her to play, she said it was shockingly out of tune, that she had a headache, that she couldn't play.

Then, according to her custom, she rebuked herself for her pettishness and ingratitude, and determined to make a reparation to honest William for the slight she had not expressed to him, but had felt for his piano.

A few days afterwards, as they were seated in the drawing-room, where Jos had fallen asleep with great comfort after dinner, Amelia said with rather a faltering voice to Major Dobbin,—

"I have to beg your pardon for something."

"About what?" said he.

"About—about that little square piano. I never thanked you for it when you gave it me; many, many years ago, before I was married. I thought somebody else had given it. Thank you, William." She held out her hand; but the poor little woman's heart was bleeding; and as for her eyes, of course they were at their work.

But William could hold no more. "Amelia, Amelia," he said, "I did buy it for you. I loved you then as I do now. I must tell you. I think I loved you from the first minute that I saw you, when George brought me to your house, to show me the Amelia whom he was engaged to. You were but a girl, in white, with large ringlets; you came down singing—do you remember?—and we went to Vauxhall. Since then I have thought of but one woman in the world, and that was you. I think there is no hour of the day has passed for twelve years that I haven't thought of you. I came to tell you this before I went to India, but you did not care, and I hadn't the heart to speak. You did not care whether I stayed or went."

"I was very ungrateful," Amelia said.

"No; only indifferent," Dobbin continued, desperately. I have nothing to make a woman to be otherwise. I know what you are feeling now. You are hurt in your heart at that discovery about the piano; and that it came from me and not from George. I forgot, or I should never have spoken of it so. It is for me to ask your pardon for being a fool for a moment, and thinking that years of constancy and devotion might have pleaded with you."

"It is you who are cruel now," Amelia said with some spirit. "George is my husband, here and in heaven. How could I love any other but him? I am his now as when you first saw me, dear William. It was he who told me how good and generous you were, and who taught me to love you as a brother. Have you not been everything to me and my boy? Our dearest, truest, kindest, friend and protector? Had you come a few months sooner perhaps you might have spared me that—that dreadful parting. O, it nearly killed me, William—but you didn't come, though I wished and prayed for you to come, and they took him too away from me. Isn't he a noble boy, William? Be his friend still and mine"—and here her voice broke, and she hid her face on his shoulder.

The Major folded his arms round her, holding her to him as if she was a child, and kissed her head. "I will not change, dear Amelia," he said. "I ask for no more than your love. I think I would not have it otherwise. Only let me stay near you, and see you often."

"Yes, often," Amelia said. And so William was at liberty to look and long: as the poor boy at school who has no money may sigh after the contents of the tart-woman's tray.

CHAPTER LX.

RETURNS TO THE GENTEEL WORLD.

GOOD fortune now begins to smile upon Amelia. We are glad to get her out of that low sphere in which she has been creeping hitherto, and introduce her into a polite circle; not so grand and refined as that in which our other female friend, Mrs. Becky, has appeared, but still having no small pretensions to gentility and fashion. Jos's friends were all from the three presidencies, and his new house was in the comfortable Anglo-Indian district of which Moira Place is the centre. Minto Square, Great Clive Street, Warren Street, Hastings Street, Ochterlony Place, Plassy Square, Assaye Terrace, ("Gardens" was a felicitous word not applied to stucco houses with asphalte terraces in front, so early as 1827)—who does not know these respectable abodes of the retired Indian aristocracy, and the quarter which Mr. Wenham calls the Black Hole, in a word? Jos's position in life was not grand enough to entitle him to a house in Moira Place, where none can live but retired Members of Council, and partners of Indian firms (who break after having settled a hundred thousand pounds on their wives, and retire into comparative penury to a country place and four thousand a year): he engaged a comfortable house of a second or third-rate order in Gillespie Street, purchasing the carpets, costly mirrors, and handsome and

appropriate planned furniture by Seddons, from the assignees of Mr. Scape, lately admitted partner into the great Calcutta House of Fogle, Fake, and Cracksman, in which poor Scape had embarked seventy thousand pounds, the earnings of a long and honourable life, taking Fake's place, who retired to a princely Park in Sussex, (the Fogles have been long out of the firm, and Sir Horace Fogle is about to be raised to the peerage as Baron Bandanna) —admitted, I say, partner into the great agency house of Fogle and Fake two years before it failed for a million, and plunged half the Indian public into misery and ruin.

Scape, ruined, honest, and broken-hearted at sixty-five years of age, went out to Calcutta to wind up the affairs of the house. Walter Scape was withdrawn from Eton, and put into a merchant's house. Florence Scape, Fanny Scape, and their mother faded away to Boulogne, and will be heard of no more. To be brief, Jos stepped in and bought their carpets and sideboards, and admired himself in the mirrors which had reflected their kind handsome faces. The Scape tradesmen, all honourably paid, left their cards, and were eager to supply the new household. The large men in white waistcoats, who waited at Scape's dinners, green-grocers, bank-porters, and milkmen in their private capacity, left their addresses, and ingratiated themselves with the butler. Mr. Chummy, the chimney-purifier, who had swep the last three families, tried to coax the butler and the boy under him, whose duty it was to go out covered with buttons and with stripes down his trowsers, for the protection of Mrs. Amelia whenever she chose to walk abroad.

It was a modest establishment. The butler was Jos's valet also, and never was more drunk than a butler in a small family should be who has a proper regard for his master's wine. Emmy was supplied with a maid, grown on Sir William Dobbin's suburban estate: a good girl, whose kindness and humility disarmed Mrs. Osborne, who was at first terrified at the idea of having a servant to wait upon herself, who did not in the least know how to use one, and who always spoke to domestics with the most reverential politeness. But this maid was very useful in the family, in dexterously tending old Mr. Sedley, who kept almost entirely to his own quarter of the house, and never mixed in any of the gay doings which took place there.

Numbers of people came to see Mrs. Osborne. Lady Dobbin and daughters were delighted at her change of fortune, and waited upon her. Miss Osborne from Russell Square came in her grand chariot with the flaming hammercloth emblazoned with the Leeds arms. Jos was reported to be immensely rich. Old Osborne had no objection that Georgy should inherit his uncle's property as well as his own. "Damn it, we will make a man of the feller," he said; "and I'll see him in Parliament before I die. *You* may go and see his mother, Miss O., though I'll never set eyes on her:" and Miss Osborne came. Emmy, you may be sure, was very glad to see her, and so be brought nearer to George. That young fellow was allowed to come much more frequently than before to visit his mother. He dined once or twice a week in Gillespie Street, and bullied the servants and his relations there, just as he did in Russell Square.

He was always respectful to Major Dobbin, however, and more modest

in his demeanour when that gentleman was present. He was a clever lad, and afraid of the Major. George could not help admiring his friend's simplicity, his good-humour, his various learning quietly imparted, his general love of truth and justice. He had met no such man as yet in the course of his experience, and he had an instinctive liking for a gentleman. He hung fondly by his god-father's side; and it was his delight to walk in the Parks and hear Dobbin talk. William told George about his father, about India and Waterloo, about everything but himself. When George was more than usually pert and conceited, the Major made jokes at him, which Mrs. Osborne thought very cruel. One day, taking him to the play, and the boy declining to go into the pit because it was vulgar, the Major took him to the boxes, left him there, and went down himself to the pit. He had not been seated there very long, before he felt an arm thrust under his, and a dandy little hand in a kid-glove squeezing his arm. George had seen the absurdity of his ways, and come down from the upper region. A tender laugh of benevolence lighted up old Dobbin's face and eyes as he looked at the repentant little prodigal. He loved the boy, as he did everything that belonged to Amelia. How charmed she was when she heard of this instance of George's goodness! Her eyes looked more kindly on Dobbin than they ever had done. She blushed, he thought, after looking at him so.

Georgy never tired of his praises of the Major to his mother. "I like him, Mamma, because he knows such lots of things; and he ain't like old Veal, who is always bragging and using such long words, don't you know? The chaps call him 'Longtail' at school. I gave him the name; ain't it capital? But Dob reads Latin like English, and French and that; and when we go out together he tells me stories about my Papa, and never about himself; though I heard Colonel Buckler, at Grandpapa's, say that he was one of the bravest officers in the army, and had distinguished himself ever so much. Grandpapa was quite surprised, and said '*That* feller! why, I didn't think he could say Bo to a goose'—but *I* know he could, couldn't he Mamma?"

Emmy laughed: she thought it was very likely the Major could do thus much.

If there was a sincere liking between George and the Major, it must be confessed that between the boy and his uncle no great love existed. George had got a way of blowing out his cheeks, and putting his hands in his waistcoat pockets, and saying, "God bless my soul, you don't say so," so exactly after the fashion of old Jos, that it was impossible to restrain from laughter. The servants would explode at dinner if the lad, asking for something which wasn't at table, put on that countenance and used that favourite phrase. Even Dobbin would shoot out a sudden peal at the boy's mimicry. If George did not mimic his uncle to his face, it was only by Dobbin's rebukes and Amelia's terrified entreaties that the little scapegrace was induced to resist. And the worthy civilian being haunted by a dim consciousness that the lad thought him an ass, and was inclined to turn him into ridicule, used to be extremely timorous and, of course, doubly pompous and dignified in the presence of Master Georgy. When it was announced that the young gentleman was expected in Gillespie

Street to dine with his mother, Mr. Jos commonly found that he had an engagement at the Club. Perhaps nobody was much grieved at his absence. On those days Mr. Sedley would commonly be induced to come out from his place of refuge in the upper storeys; and there would be a small family party, whereof Major Dobbin pretty generally formed one. He was the *ami de la maison*; old Sedley's friend, Emmy's friend, Georgy's friend, Jos's counsel and adviser. "He might almost as well be at Madras for anything *we* see of him," Miss Ann Dobbin remarked, at Camberwell. Ah! Miss Ann, did it not strike you that it was not *you* whom the Major wanted to marry?

Joseph Sedley then led a life of dignified otiosity such as became a person of his eminence. His very first point, of course, was to become a member of the Oriental Club: where he spent his mornings in the company of his brother Indians, where he dined, or whence he brought home men to dine.

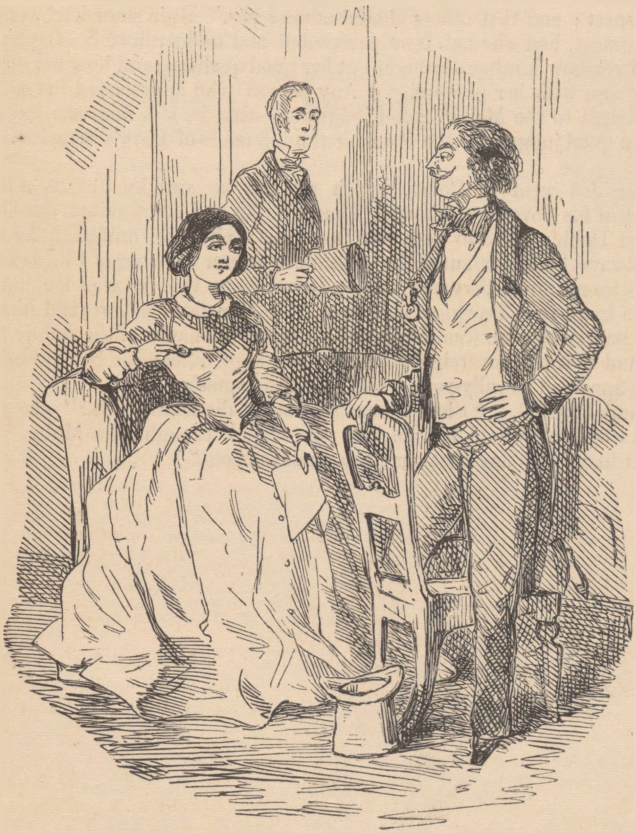
Amelia had to receive and entertain these gentlemen and their ladies. From these she heard how soon Smith would be in Council, how many lacs Jones had brought home with him: how Thomson's House in London had refused the bills drawn by Thomson, Kibobjee and Co., the Bombay House, and how it was thought the Calcutta House must go too: how very imprudent, to say the least of it, Mrs. Brown's conduct (wife of Brown of the Ahmednuggar Irregulars) had been with young Swankey of the Body Guard, sitting up with him on deck until all hours, and losing themselves as they were riding out at the Cape: how Mrs. Hardyman had had out her thirteen sisters, daughters of a country curate, the Rev. Felix Rabbits, and married eleven of them, seven high up in the service: how Hornby was wild because his wife would stay in Europe, and Trotter was appointed Collector at Ummerapoora. This and similar talk took place, at the grand dinners all round. They had the same conversation; the same silver dishes; the same saddles of mutton, boiled turkeys, and entrées. Politics set in a short time after dessert, when the ladies retired up stairs and talked about their complaints and their children.

Mutato nomine, it is all the same. Don't the barristers' wives talk about Circuit?—don't the soldiers' ladies gossip about the Regiment?—don't the clergymen's ladies discourse about Sunday Schools, and who takes whose duty?—don't the very greatest ladies of all talk about that small clique of persons to whom they belong, and why shall our Indian friends not have their own conversation?—only I admit it is slow for the laymen whose fate it sometimes is to sit by and listen.

Before long Emmy had a visiting-book, and was driving about regularly in a carriage, calling upon Lady Bludyer (wife of Major-General Sir Roger Bludyer, K.C.B., Bengal Army); Lady Huff, wife of Sir G. Huff, Bombay ditto; Mrs. Pice, the lady of Pice the Director, &c. We are not long in using ourselves to changes in life. That carriage came round to Gillespie Street every day: that buttony boy sprang up and down from the box with Emmy's and Jos's visiting cards; at stated hours Emmy and the carriage went for Jos to the Club, and took him an airing; or, putting old Sedley into the vehicle, she drove the old man round the Regent's Park. The lady's-maid and the chariot, the visiting-book and the buttony page,

became soon as familiar to Amelia as the humble routine of Brompton. She accommodated herself to one as to the other. If Fate had ordained that she should be a duchess, she would even have done that duty too. She was voted, in Jos's female society, rather a pleasing young person—not much in her, but pleasing, and that sort of thing.

The men, as usual, liked her artless kindness and simple refined demeanour. The gallant young Indian dandies at home on furlough—



immense dandies these—chained and moustached—driving in tearing cabs, the pillars of the theatres, living at West End Hotels,—nevertheless admired Mrs. Osborne, liked to bow to her carriage in the Park, and to be admitted to have the honour of paying her a morning visit. Swankey of the Body Guard himself, that dangerous youth, and the greatest buck of all the Indian army now on leave, was one day discovered by Major Dobbin *tête-à-tête* with Amelia, and describing the sport of pig-sticking to her

with great humour and eloquence: and he spoke afterwards of a d—d king's officer that's always hanging about the house—a long, thin, queer-looking oldish fellow—a dry fellow though, that took the shine out of a man in the talking line.

Had the Major possessed a little more personal vanity he would have been jealous of so dangerous a young buck, as that fascinating Bengal Captain. But Dobbin was of too simple and generous a nature to have any doubts about Amelia. He was glad that the young men should pay her respect; and that others should admire her. Ever since her womanhood almost, had she not been persecuted and undervalued? It pleased him to see how kindness brought out her good qualities, and how her spirits gently rose with her prosperity. Any person who appreciated her paid a compliment to the Major's good judgment—that is, if a man may be said to have good judgment who is under the influence of Love's delusion.

After Jos went to Court, which we may be sure he did as a loyal subject of his Sovereign (showing himself in his full court suit at the Club, whither Dobbin came to fetch him in a very shabby old uniform.) he who had always been a staunch Loyalist and admirer of George IV., became such a tremendous Tory and pillar of the State, that he was for having Amelia to go to a drawing-room, too. He somehow had worked himself up to believe that he was implicated in the maintenance of the public welfare, and that the Sovereign would not be happy unless Jos Sedley and his family appeared to rally round him at Saint James's.

Emmy laughed. "Shall I wear the family diamonds, Jos?" she said.

"I wish you would let me buy you some," thought the Major. "I should like to see any that were too good for you."

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"PATENTS RECENTLY GRANTED.—To WILLIAM DAKIN, of NUMBER "ONE, SAINT PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, 'for Improvements in Clean-"ing and Roasting Coffee, in the Apparatus and Machinery to be used "therein; and also in the Apparatus for making Infusions and Decoctions of "Coffee.'"

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT.

HER MAJESTY having been graciously pleased to grant Her Royal Letters Patent to

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OF NUMBER ONE, SAINT PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, LONDON,

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N.B. Full particulars of this ingenious and invaluable discovery will be given in the next number of this publication.